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National Intelligence Bulletin

State Dept. review completed

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Top Secret

6 December 1974

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No 654

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GREECE

Greek voters are expected to reject by a wide margin the return of King Constantine to the throne in the referendum that will be held on Sunday. The 300-member parliament, in which Prime Minister Karamanlis' New Democracy Party holds 220 seats, will then determine the exact form the republic should take. It will convene for the first time on December 9.

King Constantine, who has been in exile since 1967, has agreed to accept strict limitations on his authority if allowed to return to the throne. He is not a popular figure, however; most Greeks believe his meddling in politics before the 1967 coup helped create the political instability that sparked the military takeover.

The New Democracy Party, which has both royalists and republicans in its ranks, has adopted a strictly neutral posture on the issue, although the deputies are free to vote as they wish. The major opposition parties, on record against restoring the monarchy, have bowed to Karamanlis' dictum that the issue be settled by the people without partisan politicking.

Although the monarchy issue has been the subject of heated debates and five referenda in the past, the US embassy describes the electorate as lethargic. Earlier referenda have been rigged, but there were no indications of electoral irregularities in the recent parliamentary elections, suggesting that this referendum will be conducted in a similar fashion.

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KOREA

The pro - South Korean resolution proposed in the Political Committee of the UN General Assembly has acquired sufficient support to pass by a safe margin, but Seoul and its supporters will have to overcome procedural obstacles before a favorable outcome can be secured.

North Korea's backers apparently intend today to challenge the priority of the pro-Seoul resolution, calling for a vote on their conflicting resolution first. This move seems unlikely to succeed, but it could delay the vote on South Korea's resolution, which had been set for late today.

The US-supported resolution emphasizes the need for replacement armistice machinery--to be established under the aegis of the Security Council following the dismantling of the present UN Command mechanism. The opposing resolution simply calls for "the withdrawal of all foreign forces in Korea under the UN flag," with no mention of any new arrangement for policing the 1953 armistice.

Once the pro - South Korean resolution is passed, its sponsors may move on procedural grounds to block consideration of the North Korean resolution. It is possible, however, that the North Korean resolution will also be voted upon and pass, if only by a narrow margin. If both resolutions pass the Political Committee, there are likely to be increased pressures on both sides to achieve a compromise resolution for presentation to the General Assembly.

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KOREA

The South Korean government has determined that North Korean tunneling through the Demilitarized Zone poses a serious military threat. Seoul thus is planning to search out and destroy the tunnels.

The UN commander and the US embassy in Seoul agree that the tunnels are a threat, but they note that introducing drilling equipment and defenses for these operations may violate the armistice agreement. Additionally, this effort could prompt a North Korean reaction.

Thus far, only the tunnel discovered last month can be confirmed, but Seoul believes more exist and has identified 12 suspected excavation sites.

[redacted] Pyongyang has been digging DMZ tunnels for nearly three years.

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BURMA

Some Burmese students are trying to exploit the funeral of former UN secretary general U Thant to whip up sentiment against the Ne Win government. Several thousand students staged a protest yesterday and carried U Thant's casket to the Rangoon University campus, where they intend to keep it until the government provides a "fitting" burial site. The students reportedly were supported by Buddhist monks and nuns.

President Ne Win has long been hostile to U Thant, who was a close associate of exiled former prime minister U Nu. The government cooperated with the UN in funeral arrangements but rejected a request by U Thant's family for a national hero's burial, forcing it to be scheduled at an ordinary cemetery.

The students could draw considerable sympathy for their protests, because U Thant was greatly respected in Burma for his role in international affairs. According to the US embassy, the government's attitude toward the funeral has aroused considerable resentment in Rangoon. The government is already on the defensive because of the country's worsening economy.

The government is now calling up additional police forces in Rangoon. In the past, the Ne Win regime has acted quickly and forcefully against agitation. The army brought labor disturbances in the capital under control last June by killing more than 20 protesters.

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COSTA RICA

The status of fugitive financier Robert Vesco is becoming a major issue in Costa Rican politics. So far, the calls for his expulsion have had no anti-American overtones, but in the long run the outrage might add to Costa Rican apprehension over private US investment.

The move against him, led by a wide spectrum of newspapermen, businessmen, and government officials, was joined last week by all major union federations and teacher associations.

Despite the extensive support for his ouster, neither President Oduber nor the Legislative Assembly has responded. The legislature, in fact, has now adjourned without repealing the so called "Vesco Law"--the tailor-made extradition law pushed through congress at the end of the Figueres administration to protect Vesco. Unless the President submits the repeal bill for the extraordinary session that will deal with other unfinished business, there will be no action before next May, when ordinary sessions begin again.

For over two years, the Vesco case has been carried by the San Jose media as a headline story. During the Figueres administration, two US extradition requests were dismissed--ostensibly on legal technicalities. The financial tie between President Figueres and Vesco, however was the underlying factor. The unresponsiveness of President Oduber, Figueres' hand-picked successor, indicates that the new executive does not want to risk losing Figueres' support.

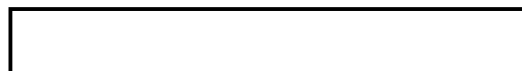
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